

*to Evangelical Religion.*

his radiance and subtilty with an earthly conformation. He is aware that religion in the abstract, or in other words, the principles which constitute the obligatory relation of all intelligent creatures to the Supreme Being, must receive a special modification, by means of the addition of some other principles, in order to become a peculiar religious economy for a particular race of those creatures, especially for a race low in rank and corrupted in nature. And the Christian revelation assigns the principles by which this religion in the abstract, the religion of the universe, is thus modified into the peculiar form required for the nature and condition of man. But when he contemplates some of these principles, framed on an assumption, and conveying a plain declaration of an ignominious and deplorable condition of our nature, he can hardly help regretting that, even if our condition *be* so degraded, the system of our relations with the Divinity, though constituted according and in adaptation to that degraded state, is not an economy of a brighter character. The gospel indeed appears to him like the image of Nebuchadnezzar's dream ; it is refulgent with a head of gold ; the sublime truths or facts of religious theory, which stand antecedent and superior to every peculiarity of the special dispensations of religion, are luminously exhibited ; but the doctrines which are added as distinctive of the peculiar circumstances of the Christian economy, appear less splendid, and as if descending towards the qualities of iron and clay. If he must admit this portion of the system as a part of the truth, his feelings amount to the wish that a different theory *had been true*. It is therefore with a degree of shrinking reluctance that he sometimes adverts to the ideas peculiar to the gospel. He would willingly lose this specific scheme of doctrines in a more general theory of religion, instead of resigning every wider speculation for this scheme, in which God has comprised, and distinguished by a very peculiar character, all the religion which he wills to be known, or to be useful, to our world. It is not a welcome conviction, that the gospel, instead of being a modification of religion exhibited in competition with others, and subject to choice or rejection according to his taste, is peremptorily and exclusively *the* religion for our lapsed race ; insomuch that he who has not a religion conformed to the model in the New Testament does not stand